

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®

FACT Sheet

WHAT WE ARE

The T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) Early Childhood Project is an umbrella for seven different scholarship programs to help child care providers complete coursework in early childhood education and increase their compensation. In 1990, Day Care Services Association (DCSA) began the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Education Project as the first program of its kind in the country.

WHERE WE ARE

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project has provided scholarships to recipients in each of the 100 counties in North Carolina. DCSA has licensed the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project in Georgia, Florida, Illinois, New York and Colorado.

WHO PARTICIPATES

Any teacher, director or family child care home provider working in a state regulated child care setting is eligible to apply for a scholarship. More than 5,000 child care providers in North Carolina have participated in the program.

WHY WE ARE NEEDED

The most critical indicator of quality child care is the level of education of child care teachers. In North Carolina, 50% of directors and 70% of teachers have no degree beyond a high school diploma. A child also needs stability during his child care experience. North Carolina has a child care center staff turnover rate of 42% per year, partially because child care teachers receive very low wages.

HOW WE HELP

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project assists teachers, directors and family child care providers in going back to school to receive more education, provides increased compensation with more education, and requires that participants agree to remain in child care for a year following training. For example, in fiscal year 1997 participants in the Associate Degree Program completed an average of 18 credit hours, received a 10 percent increase in wages and turned over at a rate of less than 10% during the year.

HOW WE ARE FUNDED

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project, the participant and their sponsoring child care program each pay a portion of the cost. Funding for T.E.A.C.H.'s portions of the cost has come from foundations, corporate contributions, federal funds and state dollars from the N.C. General Assembly.

WHO BENEFITS

Children are the main beneficiaries. They are able to bond with a provider who has made a commitment to the field, who is a specialist in early childhood education, who understands child development and who is sensitive to the needs of the very young. Providers benefit by increasing their knowledge and compensation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

DAY CARE SERVICES ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 901, Chapel Hill, NC 27514
(919) 967-3272

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project is:

- an umbrella for a variety of different scholarship programs that link education and compensation for child care providers.
- about helping child care providers help themselves. Every participating programs and scholarship recipient must share in the cost of the education.
- a low cost way to improve child care. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project raises child care quality without increasing parent fees and without more regulations.
- helping child care providers gain the education they need to do a good job and rewarding them as they do.
- designed to improve the education and compensation of the early childhood workforce and reduce turnover.
- producing results. Teachers working toward their associate degree are averaging 18 quarter credit hours per year, receiving more compensation and turn over at a rate of less than 10% per year.
- licensed and operating in five other states, Georgia, Illinois, Florida, New York and Colorado.
- providing scholarships to child care providers in all of North Carolina's 100 counties.



Building brighter futures for North Carolina's children

What is Smart Start?

Smart Start is a comprehensive public-private initiative to help all North Carolina children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. Smart Start programs and services provide children under age six, access to high-quality and affordable child care, health care and other critical family services.

Smart Start was launched in 1993 by Gov. Jim Hunt and is the only program of its kind because it is a comprehensive approach to preparing children for school. Local partnerships determine programs and services that best meet local needs. The North Carolina Partnership for Children is the nonprofit organization which sets guidelines as well as provides oversight and technical assistance to local partnerships across the state.

FACTS

- High quality child care makes a difference. Smart Start has increased the overall quality of child care in the 18 counties which first started providing programs and services. (*FPG study*)
- The number of top quality child care centers in the state has increased by more than 60 percent in Smart Start counties.
- Smart Start program and services are currently in 55 counties. This year the remaining 45 counties will enter the planning phase, expanding Smart Start to all 100 counties.

Getting results throughout the state

In Ashe County, 58 of the 69 child care teachers in the county (85 percent) have received a higher level of education, through a credential or degree program, because of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project.

In Orange County, 182 child care teachers and directors received salary supplements to increase their education and to encourage them to remain in their programs. As a result, there was a 22 percent decrease in the turnover rate in the county.

In Wilkes County, every child care center in the county and 50 percent of its family child care homes are participating in Smart Start programs designed to improve the care for children. These improved services are affecting the care of approximately 1,234 of their young children.

Because of the collaboration initiated through Smart Start, the local community college in Cleveland County has established an early childhood associate degree program, a child care administrators certificate program as well as the child care credential program. None of these were in place prior to Smart Start.

In Person County, an assessment was conducted of children who were not recommended for promotion to kindergarten. No child identified as unready was involved in Smart Start services.

In Cumberland County, 3,578 new spaces are available for children in licensed family child care homes and centers, Head Start, and other early intervention programs.

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► OUR GOAL

Smart Start reaches children during the most critical years of development, with the intent that they arrive to school healthy, motivated and ready to succeed. Our goal is to ensure that every child in North Carolina has this opportunity for a brighter future.

● CORE SERVICES

• Child care:

high quality

(incentives for higher quality, TEACH, classroom assessment, technical assistance)

accessible

(resource & referral, transportation, additional child care spaces)

affordable

(financial help for low-income working families)

• Health

(vision, dental, hearing screenings, immunizations)

• Family Support

(family resource centers, resources/information for parents)

FACTS

In 32 Smart Start counties:

- more than 34,000 children have received child care subsidies so their parents can work.
- more than 22,000 child care spaces have been created.
- more than 72,000 children have received early intervention and preventive health screenings.
- more than 26,000 teachers have received additional training through Smart Start educational programs.
- Smart Start should be expanded statewide:

Eighteen percent of kindergartners in 1995 were not ready to participate successfully in school, according to their teachers. (UNC-CH)

- The NC Partnership adopted and implemented an accountability plan to ensure the fiscal integrity and accountability for all Smart Start funds and programs.

- The NC Partnership raised \$3.4 million this year for fiscal year 1996-'97. In-kind contributions were \$4.7 million. There were more than 107,000 hours of volunteer time donated. In total, more than \$18 million in cash has been raised since Smart Start began.

In Halifax County, a large rural county, a child care and education program was established in 1995 through Smart Start and now serves 160 children in four Head Start classrooms and three child care classrooms. The school system makes the school available at no cost and blends funds with Smart Start to pay for the food program, cafeteria, custodial staff and transportation.

Six pre-kindergarten classes have been established in Jones County to teach readiness skills to young children who have never been exposed to learning activities. In addition, eight learning groups have been established for very young children in area churches to allow them to have readiness experiences.

In Catawba County, almost 1,000 children receive subsidized child care every month with funds provided through Smart Start and the waiting list for child care has been completely eliminated. This county has allocated 79.3 percent of their total Smart Start funds to pay for subsidies and to improve the quality of child care.

Mecklenburg County spends more than 80 percent of their Smart Start funding to subsidize child care. Last year nearly 7,000 children were involved in programs that received Smart Start enhancements to improve the quality of their care.

In Burke County, prior to Smart Start, more than 33 percent of the children entering kindergarten needed dental treatment. Through Smart Start, a public dental health clinic was established, bringing together local dentists and the health department, to provide dental treatment for children and dental education for parents. More than 200 children have had corrective treatment done in the clinic so far.

Smart Start has made it possible for nearly 1,400 children in Lenoir and Greene counties to have health and developmental screenings.

In Nash and Edgecombe counties, 2,265 families with young children have been identified through the Smart Start outreach project and have received parent education and support.

Smart Start cited a national model

North Carolina is one of only eight states in the nation with a comprehensive, focused plan to promote the well-being of children, according to Columbia University.

Research conducted by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center determined that Smart Start has increased the overall quality of child care in the 18 counties which first started providing programs and services.

Working Mother magazine recognized North Carolina as working harder than any other state in the nation to improve the quality of child care and expand services to children and families. In 1995, the magazine called North Carolina the "Most Exciting State" because of Smart Start.

The Pittsburgh Gazette, *The New York Times*, and *Appalachia* magazine have recognized Smart Start and North Carolina as a model for early childhood initiatives.

Through its efforts with Smart Start, Wilkes Community College was selected among 12 other programs in the nation to receive the Secretary's Award for Outstanding Adult Education and Literacy.

A Coopers & Lybrand Performance Audit called for the expansion of Smart Start and confirmed that it is a "credible program that delivers substantial good to children and families in North Carolina."

